

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 17416

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJECT: ASSUMPTION BY MAP MATERIEL RECIPIENTS OF PCH AND T
COSTS

REF: STATE 241913

1. THE PROPOSAL TO INSIST THAT THE RTG ASSUME PCH AND T COSTS FOR MAP DELIVERIES IS UNTIMELY AND LIKELY TO GENERATE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED. THIS LATEST PROPOSAL COMING ON THE HEELS OF A GREATLY DIMINISHED MAP, THE US POLICY TO PHASE OUT O AND M SUPPORT AND THE THAI VIEW THAT WE HAVE NOT PROVIDED ADEQUATE SUPPORT TO INCREASE RTARF SELF-SUFFICIENCY WILL ONLY SERVE TO CONFIRM GROWING DOUBTS OVER THE US COMMITMENT TO THE RTG.

2. THE RTG ALSO MAKES THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE US DRAWDOWN, THE CONTINUING THREAT POSED BY NORTH VIETNAM COUPLED WITH INSTABILITY IN CAMBODIA AND LAOS, AND THEIR OWN INABILITY TO COUNTER AN INVASION WITH INFERIOR EQUIPMENT AND POOR LOGISTICAL APPARATUS. EVEN THE SLAT STOCKS HAVE BEEN WHITTLED DOWN AND THE RTG SEES LITTLE PROGRESS BEING MADE TOWARD IMPROVING RTARF CAPABILITIES THROUGH THE ACQUISITION
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OF NEW VEHICLES, MORTARS, ARTILLERY, COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS,

RIVER PATROL BOATS, AND THE REPLACEMENT OF ATTRITION LOSSES OF HELICOPTERS.

3. THE TIMING OF THIS PROPOSAL IS EQUALLY AWKWARD SINCE THE RTG ANNUAL BUDGET HAS ALREADY BEEN PASSED AND INCLUDES NO APPROPRIATION FOR FUTURE OR PAST PCH AND T COSTS. INDEED, ONLY TODAY RTA CINC GENERAL KRIS SIVARA COMPLAINED TO VISITING ACTING CINC USARPAC GENERAL STILWELL THAT CURRENT THAI DEFENSE BUDGET WAS ACTUALLY SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW LAST YEAR'S IN REAL TERMS BECAUSE OF UNCOMPENSATED INFLATIONARY EFFECTS.

4. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS COMMENCED AND WE ARE GOING THROUGH A PERIOD WHEN THE US PRESENCE IN THAILAND WILL DRAW INCREASING CRITICISM, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, FOR MANY OF THE PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY. ALL THESE ISSUES PLACED SIDE BY SIDE CAN ONLY HASTEN THE DAY WHEN THE US GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ASKED TO PAY RENTAL FOR OCCUPYING THAI REAL ESTATE OR TO DEMONSTRATE IN OTHER WAYS THE MEANING OF OUR PROMISES AND INTENTIONS, AND THIS LATEST PROPOSAL WILL ONLY DEEPEN THAI DOUBTS ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT. OUR STAKE HERE IS SUBSTANTIAL AND CURRENT POLITICAL CONDITIONS STRONGLY DICTATE WE SHOULD NOT INSIST THAT THE RTG ASSUME PCH AND T COSTS AT THIS JUNCTURE.

5. WHILE HE MADE NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLEMENTS WAS SYMPATHETIC DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BANGKOK TO THAI REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. IT WOULD BE A REAL BLOW FOR THE THAI, IN THE WAKE OF THIS VISIT, TO BE TOLD NOW THAT MAP FOR THAILAND WILL BE CUT FURTHER TO COVER THESE ADDITIONAL COSTS.

KINTNER

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